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SUBJECT: GOMA NOTES 04/04/08 - SRSG DOSS BRIEFS THE HUMANITARIAN
COMMUNITY

11. (SBU) Summary: SRSG Doss described the UN Security Stabilization Strategy as an effective framework for coordinating North Kivu diplomatic, political, military and humanitarian initiatives an April 4 briefing in Goma. He said that MONUC will give timely briefings to NGOs on military movements and is preparing dossiers on CNDP and FDLR human rights violations. NGO reps pushed for better communication and consultation with government officials and leaders of the Amani program, noting that IDPs are mostly unaware of its existence. Eastern Division Commander General Singh promised to arrange meetings between MONUC commanders and OCHA to discuss using military escorts to facilitate humanitarian operations. End summary.

12. (SBU) SRSG Alan Doss outlined the UN Security Stabilization Strategy to representatives of UN agencies, MONUC, NGOs and the Goma-based International Facilitation at OCHA headquarters April 4. Doss regards the Strategy as an effective framework for coordinating diplomatic, political, military and humanitarian initiatives going forward. He said it was not a master plan but a guide, incorporating principles from the Nairobi and Goma/Amani processes and covering activities in Kinshasa as well as eastern Congo. The goal of the Strategy is to make these activities -- all of them in Congolese hands -- more coherent, to help the partners "sing harmoniously from the same hymn sheet."

13. (SBU) Doss touched only briefly on military issues during his briefing. Military activity should protect the civilian population but not supplant civilian activity, he said, creating humanitarian space but not filling it.

Pressure on MONUC

14. (SBU) In the following Q&A, NGO representatives appealed for help from MONUC military in several areas. Exclusion zones notwithstanding, MSF's operations in Kivu are still hampered by violence, and population displacement continues. Food is inadequate and people are reduced to eating electrolyte salts. MSF asked for regular, transparent military briefings to be able to prepare for disruptions in certain areas, notably villages northwest of Sake, where bands of PARECO fighters are disintegrating into smaller groups of looters. MSF's rep noted that in both Goma and Masisi there is always the risk that a single stray bullet will scare off international humanitarian agencies, leaving the population again without help.

15. (SBU) WFP complained that the general situation in North Kivu is deteriorating. Bad roads prevent sufficient assistance from arriving in affected areas. Only MONUC has the capacity to operate in the province and provide escort for WFP trucks if ordered. WFP's

rep predicted the remaining road infrastructure will collapse within 2-3 weeks, and with it humanitarian assistance to Walikali and Masisi territories.

¶16. (SBU) Doss committed to timely briefing by MONUC on military movements, excluding certain operational details. As for road improvements, he suggested using engineers from the South Kivu-based Pakistani battalion, and promised to consult further with MONUC's North Kivu Brigade regarding humanitarian escort. Eastern Division Commander General Bikram Singh agreed to support these approaches. Doss urged all partners to help out agencies experiencing troubles since MONUC is not equipped to solve all problems.

Human rights

¶17. (SBU) Human rights organizations turned the conversation to sexual violence perpetrated by members of armed groups. Doss declared flatly that this will not end until all the groups are dismantled. He said that sexual violence is embedded in some local cultures and that much time will be needed before attitudes change. In anticipation of action against armed groups, MONUC is preparing detailed dossiers on CNDP and FDLR human rights violations. (Note: Some reps complained on the margins of the briefing that the issue was not getting higher priority. Is it right, one representative asked, that a Congolese woman should be raped by soldiers of her own army and left to wait until cultures change before she gets help? End note.)

Calls for outreach

¶18. (SBU) NGO reps pushed for better communication and consultation with government officials and leaders of the Amani program. They

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claimed that IDPs, for example, are mostly unaware of Amani's creation and other important changes. This political-diplomatic work needs to move closer to its targets, along with the vision of the Congolese participants in the program.

¶19. (SBU) Singh said that MONUC military can help advance the process. He promised to bring commanders from MONUC's Kivu-based forces to meet with OCHA on how to use military escorts to facilitate humanitarian operations. Doss added that police are also essential to the stabilization process and noted that Interior Minister Denis Kalume recently agreed to enhanced police presence in Goma. Doss ended the meeting with an axiom: Visibility plus mobility yields stability and reduced violence.

GARVELINK